NO   In reference to the above captioned, you can include a page that additionally contains an Include instruction under the herein stated circumstances. The page including the Include instruction is included when you paginate the document, but the included text referred to in its Include instruction is not included. [This message is meaningless, but the writer seems to understand the message. Anyone who doesn't is clearly uninformed or unable to read intelligently.]

—From instructions for compiling a user's manual

In response to earlier editions of this handbook, we've been asked to give a YES alternative for this example. We regret that we can't understand enough of the NO example to do that. If you, gentle reader, can, please contact us at <troykalq@nyc.rr.com>.

CHAPTER 21

Spelling

21a What makes a good speller?

You might be surprised to hear that good spellers don't know how to spell and hyphenate every word they write. What they do know, however, is to check if they're not sure of a word's spelling. If your inner voice questions a spelling, do what good spellers do—consult a dictionary.

👁 **ALERT:** Word processing software usually includes a spell-check program, which claims to spot spelling errors because the words typed in don't match the spellings in the software's dictionary. Such programs have one major drawback. The programs can't detect that you've spelled a wrong word if what you've typed is a legitimate spelling of a legitimate word. For example, if you mean *top* but type *too,* or if you mean *from* and type *form,* no spell-check program "sees" a mistake. In these and other similar cases, only the human eye (that is, a reader) can discover the errors. 👁

21b How can I proofread for errors in spelling and hyphen use?

Many spelling errors are the result of illegible handwriting, slips of the pen, or typographical mistakes. Catching these "typos" requires especially careful proofreading, using the techniques in Box 21-1.

Proofreading for errors in spelling

- Slow down your reading speed to allow yourself to concentrate on the individual letters of words rather than on the meaning of the words.

- Stay within your "visual span," the number of letters you can identify with a single glance (for most people, about six letters).

- Put a ruler or large index card under each line as you proofread, to focus your vision and concentration. Onscreen, highlight a small area.

- Read each paragraph in reverse, from the last sentence to the first. This method can keep you from being distracted by the meaning of the material.

21c How are plurals spelled?

In American English, plurals take many forms. The most common form adds an *s* or *es* at the end of the word. The list below covers all variations of creating plurals.

- **Adding -s or -es:** Plurals of most words are formed by adding an *s,* including words that end in "hard" -*ch* (sounding like *k*): *leg, leg***s**; *shoe, shoe***s**; *stomach, stomach***s**. Words ending in -*s, -sh, -x, -z,* or "soft" -*ch* (as in *beach*) are formed by adding -*es* to the singular: *len***s**, *lens***es**; *tax***x**, *tax***es**; *beach***, *beach***es**.

- **Words ending in -o:** Add -*s* if the -*o* is preceded by a vowel: *radi***o**, *radio***s**; *came***o**, *cameo***s**. Add -*es* if the -*o* is preceded by a consonant: *potat***o**, *potato***es**. With a few words, you can choose the -*s* or -*es* plural form, but current practice generally supports adding -*es: carg***o**, *cargo***es**; *tornad***o**, *tornado***es**; *zer***o**, *zero***s** or *zer***o**es.

- **Words ending in -f or -fe:** Some final *f* and *fe* words are made plural by adding an *s: belief*, *belief***s**. Others require changing -*f* or -*fe* to -*ves: life***, *li***ves**; *leaf***, *lea***ves**. Words ending in -*ff* or -*ffe* simply add -*s: staff*, *staff***s**; *giraffe*, *gira***ffes**.

- **Compound words:** For most compound words, add an *s* or *es* at the end of the last word: *checkbook***s**, *player-coach***es**. In a few cases, the first word is made plural: *sister-in-law, sister***s**-*in-law; mile***s** *per hour.* (For information about hyphens in compound words, see 21g.)

- **Internal changes and endings other than -s:** A few words change internally or add endings other than an *s* to become plural: *foot*, *f***eet**; *man, m***en**; *crisis, crises; child, child***ren**.

- **Foreign words:** The best advice is to check your dictionary. In general, many Latin words ending in *-um* form the plural by changing *-um* to *-a: cur-ricul**um**, curricul**a***; *dat**um**, dat**a***; *medi**um**, medi**a***. Also, Latin words that end in *-us* usually form the plural by changing *-us* to *-i: alumn**us**, alumn**i***; *syllab**us**, syllab**i***. Additionally, Greek words that end in *-on* usually form the plural by changing *-on* to *-a: criteri**on**, criteri**a***; *phenomen**on**, phenomen**a***.

- **One-form words:** Some words have the same form in both the singular and the plural: *deer, elk, fish.* You need to use modifiers, as necessary, to indicate which form you mean: **one** *deer,* **nine** *deer.*

EXERCISE 21-1 Write the correct plural form of these words. For help, consult 21c.

1. yourself	6. millennium	11. echo
2. sheep	7. lamp	12. syllabus
3. photo	8. runner-up	13. wife
4. woman	9. criterion	14. get-together
5. appendix	10. lunch	15. crisis

21d How are suffixes spelled?

A **suffix** is an ending added to a word that changes the word's meaning or its grammatical function. For example, adding the suffix *-able* to the VERB *depend* creates the ADJECTIVE *dependable.*

- **-y words**: If the letter before a final *y* is a consonant, change the *y* to *i* and add the suffix: *tr**y**, tr**ies**, tr**ied***. In the case of *trying* and similar words, the following rule applies: Keep the *y* when the suffix begins with *i* (*apply*, appl**ying**). If the letter before the final *y* is a vowel, keep the final *y*: *employ*, employ**ed**, employ**ing***. These rules don't apply to IRREGULAR VERBS (see Box 8-4 in section 8d).

- **-e words**: Drop a final *e* when the suffix begins with a vowel, unless doing this would cause confusion: for example, *be + ing* can't be written *bing*, but *require* does become *requiring; like* does become *liking*. Keep the final *e* when the suffix begins with a consonant: *require, require**ment**; like, like**ly***. Exceptions include *argue, arg**ument**; judge, jud**gment**; true, tr**uly***.

- **Words that double a final letter:** If the final letter is a consonant, double it *only* if it passes three tests: (1) its last two letters are a vowel followed by a consonant; (2) it has one syllable or is accented on the last syllable; (3) the suffix begins with a vowel: *drop, drop**ped**; begin, begin**ning**; forget, forget**table***.

- **-cede, -ceed, -sede words**: Only one word in the English language ends in *-sede: super**sede***. Only three words end in *-ceed: ex**ceed**, pro**ceed**, suc**ceed***. All other words with endings that sound like "seed" end in *-cede: con**cede**, inter**cede**, pre**cede***.

- ***-ally*** **and** ***-ly*** **words**: The suffixes *-ally* and *-ly* turn words into adverbs. For words ending in *-ic*, add *-ally: logic**ally**, statistic**ally***. Otherwise, add *-ly: quick**ly**, sharp**ly***.

- ***-ance, -ence,*** **and** ***-ible, -able***: No consistent rules govern words with these suffixes. When in doubt, look up the word.

21e   What is the *ie, ei* rule?

The famous rhymed rule for using *ie* and *ei* is usually true:

> *I* before *e* [beli**e**ve, fi**e**ld, gri**e**f],
>
> Except after *c* [c**e**iling, conc**e**it],
>
> Or when sounded like "ay"_____
>
> As in n**ei**ghbor and w**ei**gh [**ei**ght, v**ei**n].

There are major exceptions (sorry!) to the *ie, ei* rule, listed here. My best advice is that you memorize them.

- ***ie***: consc**ie**nce, financ**ie**r, sc**ie**nce, spec**ie**s

- ***ei***: **ei**ther, n**ei**ther, l**ei**sure, s**ei**ze, counterf**ei**t, for**ei**gn, forf**ei**t, sl**ei**ght (as in *sleight of hand*), w**ei**rd

EXERCISE 21-2   Follow the directions for each group of words. For help, consult 21d and 21e.

1. Add *-able* or *-ible*: (a) profit; (b) reproduce; (c) control; (d) coerce; (e) recognize.
2. Add *-ance* or *-ence*: (a) luxuri_____; (b) prud_____; (c) devi_____; (d) resist_____; (e) independ_____.
3. Drop the final *e* as needed: (a) true + ly; (b) joke + ing; (c) fortunate + ly; (d) appease + ing; (e) appease + ment.
4. Change the final *y* to *i* as needed: (a) happy + ness; (b) pry + ed; (c) pry + ing; (d) dry + ly; (e) beautify + ing.
5. Double the final consonant as needed: (a) commit + ed; (b) commit + ment; (c) drop + ed; (d) occur + ed; (e) regret + ful.
6. Insert *ie* or *ei* correctly: (a) rel_____f; (b) ach_____ve; (c) w_____rd; (d) n_____ce; (e) dec_____ve.

21f   How are homonyms and other frequently confused words spelled?

Homonyms are words that sound exactly like other words: *to, too, two; no, know.* The different spellings of homonyms tend to confuse many writers. The same holds for words that sound almost alike (*accept, except; conscience, conscious*).

Another reason for spelling problems is so-called swallowed pronunciation, which means one or more letters at the end of a word aren't pronounced clearly. For example, the *-d* ending in *used to* or *prejudiced* or the *-ten* ending in *written* are often swallowed rather than pronounced. When writers spell as they mispronounce, spelling errors result.

For more information about word usage that affects spelling, see Chapter 19, "Usage Glossary." Box 21-2 lists homonyms and other words that can be confused and lead to misspellings.

BOX 21-2   SUMMARY

Homonyms and other frequently confused words

- ACCEPT — to receive
  - EXCEPT — with the exclusion of
- ADVICE — recommendation
  - ADVISE — to recommend
- AFFECT — to influence [verb]; emotion [noun]
  - EFFECT — result [noun]; to bring about or cause [verb]
- ALLUSION — indirect reference
  - ILLUSION — false idea, misleading appearance
- ALREADY — by this time
  - ALL READY — fully prepared
- ALTOGETHER — thoroughly
  - ALL TOGETHER — everyone or everything in one place
- ASCENT — the act of rising or climbing
  - ASSENT — consent [noun]; to consent [verb]
- BREATH — air taken in
  - BREATHE — to take in air
- CAPITAL — major city; money
  - CAPITOL — government building
- CHOOSE — to pick
  - CHOSE — PAST TENSE of *choose*
- CITE — to point out
  - SIGHT — vision
  - SITE — a place
- COARSE — rough
  - COURSE — path; series of lectures →

Homonyms and other frequently confused words (*continued*)

- COMPLEMENT — something that completes
  - COMPLIMENT — praise, flattery
- CONSCIENCE — sense of morality
  - CONSCIOUS — awake, aware
- COUNCIL — governing body
  - COUNSEL — advice [noun]; to advise [verb]
- DAIRY — place associated with milk production
  - DIARY — personal journal
- DESERT — to abandon [verb]; dry, usually sandy area [noun]
  - DESSERT — final, sweet course in a meal
- DIE — to lose life (dying) [verb]; one of a pair of dice [noun]
  - DYE — to change the color of something (dyeing)
- ELICIT — to draw out
  - ILLICIT — illegal
- EMINENT — prominent
  - IMMANENT — living within; inherent
  - IMMINENT — about to happen
- FAIR — light-skinned; just, honest
  - FARE — money for transportation; food
- FORTH — forward
  - FOURTH — number four in a series
- GORILLA — animal in ape family
  - GUERRILLA — soldier conducting surprise attacks
- HOLE — opening
  - WHOLE — complete; an entire thing
- INSURE — buy or give insurance
  - ENSURE — guarantee, protect
- ITS — POSSESSIVE form of *it*
  - IT'S — CONTRACTION for *it is*
- LEAD — heavy metal substance [noun]; to guide [verb]
  - LED — past tense of *lead*
- LIGHTNING — storm-related electricity
  - LIGHTENING — making lighter

→

Homonyms and other frequently confused words (*continued*)

■	LOOSE	unbound, not tightly fastened
	LOSE	to misplace
■	MAYBE	perhaps [adverb]
	MAY BE	might be [verb]
■	MINER	a person who works in a mine
	MINOR	underage; less important
■	MORAL	distinguishing right from wrong; the lesson of a fable, story, or event
	MORALE	attitude or outlook, usually of a group
■	OF	PREPOSITION indicating origin
	OFF	away from; not on
■	PASSED	past tense of *pass*
	PAST	at a previous time
■	PATIENCE	forbearance
	PATIENTS	people under medical care
■	PRECEDE	to come before
	PROCEED	to continue
■	PRESENCE	being at hand; attendance at a place or in something
	PRESENTS	gifts
■	PRINCIPAL	foremost [ADJECTIVE]; school head [noun]
	PRINCIPLE	moral conviction, basic truth
■	QUIET	silent, calm
	QUITE	very
■	RIGHT	correct; opposite of *left*
	RITE	ritual
	WRITE	to put words on paper
■	SCENE	place of an action; segment of a play
	SEEN	viewed
■	SENSE	perception, understanding
	SINCE	measurement of past time; because
■	STATIONARY	standing still
	STATIONERY	writing paper
■	THAN	in comparison with; besides
	THEN	at that time; next; therefore

➡

21g What are compound words?

A **compound word** puts together two or more words to express one concept.

Open compound words remain as separate words, such as *decision making, problem solving,* and *editor in chief.*

Hyphenated compound words use a hyphen between the words, such as *trade-in, fuel-efficient,* and *tax-sheltered.* For punctuation advice about hyphens, see 28i.

Closed compound words appear as one word, such as *proofread, city-wide,* and *workweek.*

The history of compound terms that end up as single words usually starts with the compound as two words, and then moves to a hyphenated compound. To check whether a compound term consists of closed, hyphenated, or open words, consult an up-to-date dictionary.